

COMPARISON OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SELECTED PRIVATE AND
GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOLS IN ZAMBIA

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the type of quality assurance mechanisms that exist in government and private schools in Zambia and their effects on learner performance. It was guided by the following objectives: (i) To determine type of quality assurance mechanisms in government and private high schools (ii) To establish the similarities of quality assurance mechanisms between Government and private high schools. (iii) To establish the differences of quality assurance mechanisms between Government and private high schools and (iv) To determine the effects of the quality assurance mechanisms on learner academic performance. In order to create context of the study, the following factors that constitute quality assurance mechanisms were analysed: input (pupil book ratio, teacher pupil ratio, teacher class ratio, and financial investment and teacher qualification), process (teacher utilization, space utilization and teacher supervision) and output (drop out, completion and examination pass rates). It was found that both government and private high schools had mechanisms for quality assurance. There were more similarities than differences with regard to the quality assurances mechanisms that had been put in place. In relation to the implications of the quality assurance mechanisms on learner performance, it was found that private schools had more effective quality assurance mechanisms and better pupil performance. This was attributed to the adequate provision of resources to support the quality assurance indicators namely the input, process and output. On the other hand, learner performance in government schools was lower due to in adequate or lack of resources needed to support the quality assurance mechanisms. The study concluded with the following recommendations: (i) Government needs to continue investing in high schools in order to reduce overcrowding, high pupil teacher and book ratios. (ii) Inspection of teachers as a quality assurance mechanism needs to be enhanced. (iii) Government and private schools must regularly conduct joint Continuous Professional Development meetings in order to share their best practices on quality assurance mechanism.